

THAILAND MASTER

Similan and Surin Islands, 6 nights

Thap Lamu Pier, Khao Lak | Similan, Surin and Richelieu Rock

Manta rays and whale sharks glide past the pinnacles of the northern Andaman Sea, with the best chance of the big ones from late January to April.

Around the Similan Islands, huge granite boulders and swim-throughs are patrolled by white tip reef sharks, schooling giant trevally and neon fusiliers.

A remote limestone pinnacle in purple soft corals and magnificent sea anemones hides pharaoh cuttlefish, ornate ghost pipefish and tiger tail seahorses.

The Surin Islands have some of the greatest hard coral diversity in Thailand, and dolphins are often seen swimming alongside the boat.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	EXPERIENCE
7 days / 6 nights	Thap Lamu Pier	Thap Lamu Pier	Advanced recommended







Your route

STOP 1

Embarkation

Embarkation at 19:00 is followed by briefings and dinner.

STOP 2

Days 2 to 6: Diving days

Your Cruise Director schedules up to 4 dives a day: 3 day dives and a sunset or night dive.
A typical diving day is a light breakfast, briefing and dive 1; full breakfast, relaxation, briefing and dive 2; lunch, relaxation, briefing and dive 3; a snack and a briefing for the sunset or night dive; then dinner.

STOP 7

Last day

Following breakfast, disembarkation is scheduled for 10:00.

THE TRIP

How the trip works

ITINERARY DETAILS

The itinerary involves some long distance travel. Bad weather and sea conditions can affect the boat's ability to reach a dive site in good time and may reduce the number of dives. Along the route there are views of forested islands and deserted beaches, and you can leave the boat to walk on the islands.

WEATHER AND ROUTE

The itinerary is an example. The route and dive sites depend on local regulations, weather and sea conditions, and are at the Captain's discretion. Where a named dive site cannot be reached, the crew offers diving at an alternative location.

DIVING EXPERIENCE

We recommend divers have PADI Advanced Open Water certification, or equivalent, with a minimum of 10 logged dives and experience in strong currents. The Advanced Open Water course can usually be completed on board with advance notice. Guests who do not fulfil the minimum certification and experience requirements may be denied participation in some or all dives. Diving insurance covering emergency evacuation and recompression is mandatory. Leave a minimum of 24 hours between your final dive and the departure of your flight. Safety and dive briefings are given in English.

THE DIVING

Dive sites

Named sites are examples of where the boat may dive; which sites are visited depends on conditions and the length of the trip.

SIMILAN ISLANDS

The above water scenery will provide stunningly beautiful white sandy beaches with small forested areas. Dive some of the following sites; Boulder City, Shark Fin Reef, Anita's Reef and Three Trees. Under the surface you may see: Leopard (zebra) shark, blue spotted stingrays, clown triggerfish, rabbit fish, scorpion fish, snappers, emperor fish, giant trevally and angelfish. The coral gardens, bommies and boulder formations are wonderful to dive. Elephant Head Rock, visible from the surface, is the biggest pinnacle in the Similans and has some fantastic swim-throughs. White tip reef sharks, batfish, trevally and barracuda can often be seen on the perimeter of the boulders. If you look closely in the cracks and in the rubble you can see smashing mantis shrimp, porcelain crab, moray eels and cleaner shrimp. There are also sites dominated by huge granite boulders such as Deep Six, Christmas Point, and North Point where you can

see white tip reef sharks, schooling giant trevally, and schools of neon fusiliers.





KOH BON

This is generally the most likely place to see manta rays on this itinerary. You are also likely to see Napoleon wrasse, sweetlips, octopus, bluefin trevally, giant moray eels, great barracudas, fire dart goby, spiny lobster and nudibranchs of many types. The dive sites vary from wall diving to gently sloping reefs and from submerged boulders to coral gardens. Diving on the West Ridge can be an adrenaline filled drift, with amazing views, while the North Reef is a gentler experience over a hard coral garden.

KOH TACHAI

This island is famous for its pinnacle dive site, known by many as Twin Peaks as well as more relaxed reef diving on the North Reef and South Reef. Normally, turtles, barracuda, pipefish, and nudibranchs can be found here. There is also a chance to see bigger species in this area like manta rays and whale sharks, especially by late January until April.

RICHELIEU ROCK

This limestone pinnacle was named by Jacques Cousteau after Cardinal Richelieu due to the similarity to the colour of his gown as there are gorgeous purple dendronephthya soft corals covering most of the pinnacle. There are other areas covered in magnificent sea anemones as well. Barely breaking the surface at low tide, this horseshoe-shaped outcropping slopes steeply to a sandy bottom at 18 to 35 metres (60-120 Ft). This site offers great diversity for such a small and isolated spot. It also offers excellent multi-level diving and, because it's a high-profile reef, there's always sheltered areas to hide from current. The marine life is prolific and includes amongst, many other things; pharaoh cuttlefish, large octopi, all 5 varieties of anemone fish of the Andaman Sea, variety of moray eels, ornate ghost pipefish, smashing mantis shrimps, harlequin shrimps, tiger tail seahorses, spanish mackerel, frog fish, many schooling snapper and occasional sightings of manta rays and whale sharks.





SURIN ISLANDS

The topside scenery of Koh Surin, with evergreen forests, mangroves, and small beaches, surpasses even that of the picturesque Similan Islands. Under water the reefs of Surin have some of the greatest hard coral diversity in Thailand. Across sites like Torinla Pinnacle, Hin Kong, and Turtle Ledges you are likely to see Napoleon wrasse, yellow-masked angelfish, bumphead parrotfish, tomato anemonefish and barramundi, as well as lots of turtles that still come ashore in this area to lay their eggs. Because of the remoteness not many liveaboard boats visit these islands and you will be able to enjoy the dive sites without sharing it with tourist hordes.

KHAO LAK WRECKS

Before disembarking in Khao Lak, if conditions and timing are favourable there is a choice of easily diveable wrecks between the Similan Islands and the port of Tap Lamu. The Boonsung and The Premchai are old tin miners that were sunk in the 1990's and are a treat for underwater photographers as well as lovers of life of all kinds! Only in 18m of water they are covered in nudibranchs and various kinds of shrimps. Many quite unusual honeycomb morays also made these wrecks home. There are also huge numbers of schooling fish as well as rays and sharks that can occasionally be seen. Sea Chart 1 is a slightly more challenging dive and lies between 40 and 25 metres. Sunk during a storm in 2009 with a full load of teak, she is relatively new but already hosts an abundance of schooling fish. Along the route there are some incredible views from the boat including verdant forests, deserted beaches, and limestone karsts climbing vertically from the ocean. There will be several opportunities to leave the boat and take a walk on the islands. A walk up the trail to Sail Rock is definitely time well spent! You can even be entertained by marine life while relaxing on board our vessel as dolphins cruising along with the boat are not an unusual sight.



